

[24th July, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

bilateral and multilateral trade; economic and financial issues and improve business avenues?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Deteriorating Balance of Trade

8. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the situation of India's balance of trade is deteriorating;

(b) if so, what are the details of the balance of trade during the last three years; and

(c) what are the reasons for widening of the gap between exports and imports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) The details of the balance of trade during the last three years are as follows:

Year	Value (in US \$ billion)
1997-98	-6.48
1998-99	-9.17
1999-2000*	-8.62

**Data for 1999-2000 are provisional and subject to change.*

As evident from above data, situation of balance of trade has not deteriorated during 1999-2000. The balance of trade depends on the gap between exports and imports; the imports are essential to meet our requirements of fuel, raw materials and capital goods for export industries.

Alternative Crops for Tobacco

9. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Hon'ble Prime Minister during his recent

visit to the State of Andhra Pradesh made a request to the tobacco growing peasants to find out some alternative crops;

(b) if so, what are the details of the difficulties being faced by Government to overcome the crisis of the tobacco market; and

(c) whether Government are also making some proposal to give assistance to all the tobacco growers in India to switch over to some other agriculture produce?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Huge accumulated stocks with the trade and Government agencies, excess production consecutively in the previous and in the current years, sluggish demand in the international market due to over supply have posed serious problems in marketing tobacco.

(c) In the 22nd report of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation (Xth Lok Sabha), the Committee had recommended providing the monetary help to farmers for changing over tobacco cultivation to alternative crops, research for developing new technology, high yielding varieties, fertilisers etc. for the alternative crops so as to help the farmers to maintain their level of profit while switching over to these alternative crops.

Dealers of Messey Furgueson Tractor in Rajasthan

†10. **SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of dealers of Messey Furgueson Tractor in Rajasthan;

(b) the number of tractors being supplied to these dealers every month;

(c) whether these dealers take money from the farmers in advance by three months due to which tractor costs Rupees 20 to 30 thousand more to farmers;

(d) whether Government have any remedy to save the farmers from the loot of these dealers; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.